

## Message Text

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15

ACTION NEA-12

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 EB-11 COME-00 OMB-01 TRSE-00 SCEM-02

CIEP-02 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-02 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-15 USIA-12

AID-20 INT-08 RSR-01 /122 W  
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R 221320 Z MAY 73

FM AMEMBASSY KABUL

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3392

C O N F I D E N T I A L KABUL 3780

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, AF

SUBJ: CONVERSATION WITH PRIMIN SHAFIQ - PROBLEMS OF RGA

1. DURING OUR CONVERSATION ON MAY 20, PRIMIN SHAFIQ COMMENTED AT LENGTH ON ALL THINGS HE HAD WANTED TO DO IN THIS PERIOD THAT HAD BEEN POSTPONED BECAUSE OF LONG HELMAND TREATY DEBATE. HE EXPRESSED BELIEF HE HAD DONE HIS DUTY IN SIGNING TREATY AND THAT THERE WAS NO LONG " CRISIS ATMOSPHERE" BUT POSSIBILITY OF CIRSIS ALWAYS REMAINS.

2. IN RESPONSE, I NOTED MY EXPERIENCE THAT WITH GOOD POLITICIANS, IT IS USUALLY LITTLE THINGS OR THINGS THAT WERE NOT SUPPOSED TO BE MAJOR THAT MAY TRIP THEM UP, WHEREAS POOR POLITICIANS ARE ALWAYS DERAILED BY MAJOR QUESTIONS IF THEY MANAGE TO GET THAT FAR, AND SHAFIQ GOVERNMENT COMPARES FAVORABLY WITH ITS PREDECESSORS AS CONCERNS ACCOMPLISHMENTS.

3. I ALSO REMAKED THAT PRIMIN MAKES HIS OWN TASKS SOMEWHAT MORE DIFFICULT BY STILL RUNNING ONE- MAN SHOW WHICH IMPOSES SUCH BURDEN ON HIM THAT HE HAD BECOME INACCESSIBLE FOR LONG PERIODS EVEN TO HIS CLOSEST COLLABORATORS. IN AFGHAN SETTING, THESE PEOPLE WERE STILL NOT PREPARED TO GO AHEAD ON THEIR OWN AND MORE EFFECTIVE DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY IS NECESSARY. PRIMIN  
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TOOK THIS IMPLIED CRITICISM VERY WELL AND SAID HE HAD INDEED GIVEN MATTER GREAT DEAL OF THOUGHT AND WAS ACTING ON IT; HOWEVER, HIS CONCENTRATION ON THESE MATTERS HAD ALSO SUFFERED FROM PREOCCUPATION WITH HELMAND TREATY. ( SEPTTEL).

4. WHEN I INQUIRED WHETHER HIS MAJESTY WAS GIVING PRIMIN NECESSARY SUPPORT AND PUTTING HIMSELF OUT IN FRONT, PRIMIN SAID THAT HIS MAJESTY WAS INDEED SUPPORTATIVE; BUT HE IMPLIED THAT KING WAS PERHAPS NOT PUTTING HIMSELF OUT IN FRONT AS MUCH AS I SEEMED TO IMPLY. ( NOTE: IT WAS NOT CLEAR WHETHER THIS IS KING' S WIT OR THAT OF SHAFIQ).

5. IN VIEW LENGTH OF TIME OTHER SUBJECTS HAD ALREADY TAKEN, WE COVERED REMAINING AGENDA ITEMS HURRIEDLY. I INQUIRED WHETHER SHIFT OF CHAIRMANSHIP OF INVESTMENT COMMITTEE FROM MINISTRY OF COMMERCE TO MINISTRY OF MINES AND INDUSTRIES SHOULD BE INTERPRETED AS STRENGTHENING GOVERNMENT INDUSTRY SECTOR. PRIMIN RESPONDED ABSOLUTELY NOT, ESPECIALLY AS MINISTER AZIZI STRONGLY FAVORED PRIVATE ENTERPRISE WHEREVER POSSIBLE. THIS WAS ORDERLY SHIFT WHICH HAD LONG BEEN CONTEMPLATED, HE SAID.

6. PRIMIN HANDED ME INFORMAL STAFF PAPER WHICH HAD BEEN PREPARED FOR HIM IN FARSI ( WHICH WE NOW TRANSLATING). HE SAID THIS PAPER CONTAINS CERTAIN REQUESTS FOR OUR CONSIDERATION. HE ADDED THAT HE NEEDS HELP IN CONNECTION WITH OIL EXPLORATION NOTING THAT PETROLEUM AND MINERAL CODES ARE IN FINAL STAGES OF PREPARATION AND, IF PARLIAMENT CANNOT FIND TIME TO ADOPT THEM, THEY MIGHT BE PROMULGATED BY ROYAL DECREE. IN ADDITION, REGULATIONS WOULD BE PUBLISHED EMPOWERING RGA TO INVITE EXPLORATION BY FOREIGN COMPANIES WITH RGA OBLIGATION TO REPAY THEM THEIR EXPENSES IF, AFTER HAVING FOUND OIL OR MINERALS, THEY WERE NOT GIVEN NECESSARY CONCESSIONS. HE VIEWED THIS AS LARGELY MEASURE OF REASSURING PRIVATE COMPANIES AND CAUSING THEM TO MOVE AHEAD BEFORE COMPLETION OF LENGTHY WORK STILL NECESSARY ON PETROLEUM AND MINERAL CODES ( SIC).

7. ALTHOUGH HE WAS NOT SPECIFIC, HE INDICATED NEED FOR OUR HELP IN TALKING TO SOME AMERICAN EXPERTS, WHETHER PRESENTLY AVAILABLE IN AFGHANISTAN OR TO BE BROUGHT I, ON HOW TO DEVELOP CERTAIN LABOR- EXTENSIVE PROJECTS WHICH WOULD " MAKE A DIFFERENCE" IN A RELATIVELY SHORT TIME. HE WAS NOT SURE WHAT SUCH  
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PROJECTS WHOULD BE AND NEEDED ADVICE. ( BOB NATHAN WAS MENTIONED IN THIS RESPECT).

8. HE ALSO SAID HE WANTED ADVICE ON HOW TO ENCOURAGE PRIVATE

INVESTMENTS EVEN FURTHER, ESPECIALLY INVESTMENTS FROM AMERICA. I REVIEWED WITH HIM SOME OF THE OBSTACLES TO INVESTMENTS; AND HE ZEROED IN PARTICULARLY ON INEFFICIENCY AND SLOWNESS OF BUREAUCRACY, CORRUPTION, AND UNCERTAIN AND CAPRICIOUS TAXATION. PRIMIN SAID THIS IS PRECISELY WHY HE NEEDS ADVICE; HE KNOWS THESE THINGS EXIST BUT HE NEEDS SOMEBODY TO GIVE HIM A HAND ON HOW AND WHERE TO ATTACK THEM. HE THEN SAID IMPORTANT BEGINNING WAS ALREADY BEING MADE IN MINFIN PARTICULARLY.

9. CONCLUDING, SHAFIQ SAID HE WANTED TO PLEAD TO USG TO HAVE CONFIDENCE IN HIM AND IN RGA. IN STRUGGLE FOR REFORMS WHICH HE HAD TO MAKE, HE HAS TO TAKE MEASURES FOR POLITICAL REASONS WHICH MAY CAUSE RAISED EYEBROWS BUT WHICH USG SHOULD UNDERSTAND IN THE PROPER CONTEXT. HE PARTICULARLY ASKED FOR WASHINGTON UNDERSTANDING ON THESE ISSUES. (IT WAS CLEAR TO ME THAT HE WAS TALKING ABOUT CHURCH AND SCHOOL QUESTIONS AMONG OTHERS, AS WELL AS MORE LONG-RANGE PLANS OF BRINGING FOREIGN EXPERTS HERE UNDER MORE EFFECTIVE RGA CONTROL).  
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